

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 009553

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/05/2015

TAGS: PREL KDEM IZ JO

SUBJECT: IRAQ SUNNI OUTREACH: AMMAN MEETING WITH MUTLAK  
LIST CANDIDATE ALI AL-SAJRI

Classified By: DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION DANIEL RUBINSTEIN, REASONS: 1.4  
(B &D)

¶1. (C) "Sons of United Iraq Movement" Secretary General Ali Sajri told emboff December 1 he is confident that he and others from his party list in Salal ad-Din will be elected in this week's election in Iraq. Sajri, who heads Saleh Mutlak's National Assembly candidate list in the Salah ad-Din Governorate, noted that while he is currently running with Mutlak, he later plans to join up with Adnan Dulaimi after the election, and ultimately join a coalition with Iyad Allawi. Sajri said that he will press Mutlak to do the same, but will join with Allawi "whatever Saleh does." Al-Sajri asked that we press Iraq's nationalist/democratic political leadership, especially Sunnis, to stop attacking each other and recognize the need for cooperation and unity. Sajri claimed that even if an Allawi-led coalition takes control, he himself would demand no position in the next government.

Calls for "Two-Track" Approach to Sunni Outreach

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¶2. (C) Sajri praised the outcome of the recent Arab League reconciliation conference in Cairo. He argued that we and others supporting a democratic Iraq should continue outreach efforts to Harith al-Dhari and his associates, but stressed that the Sunni nationalist bloc is highly fragmented; several Sunni insurgent groups are not under the control of any of the current group of Sunni leaders. Sajri urged that we pursue a two-track approach to Sunni outreach, continuing to work with al-Dhari and his ilk, while separately expanding political contacts and talks with more local figures within the individual governorates. "The key is reaching the people," he added.

Need for Political Attention to "Pro-Iraq" Southerners

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¶3. (C) Sajri pled that greater attention be paid by Allawi, Sunni nationalists, and the USG to "pro-Iraq" forces in the south. He cited Nasiriyah as one area where he believed a large number of Sh,ia could be won over to vote for Allawi or similar candidates. He related a meeting he recently attended with several Nasiriyah Sh,ia tribal figures whom he claimed openly complained about the "Iranian occupation," and quoted one tribal Sheikh as bemoaning that "an Eastern wind is carrying us, whether we agree or not."

Skeptical of Masha, an al-Jabouri

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¶4. (C) Sajri was skeptical of his fellow Salah ad-Din native Masha, an al-Jabouri, and especially the latter's claim to control a 21,000-man local militia, under Iraqi MOD aegis. Sajri claimed that Jabouri's payroll is packed with non-members, and that many of its cadres complain that their salaries are not being paid. Sajri also alleged that Jabouri's militia is heavily engaged in black market activities. Note: al-Jabouri openly boasted to Emboff in Amman last August that he has put many ghost soldiers, including young children of Imams, on his infrastructure-protection militia payroll, as part of a larger political co-optation strategy. End Note.

Bio Background

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¶5. (C) Sajri, a Sunni arab, was born near Beiji in 1969; his father, a sheikh of the Albu Sagar and part of the Janabi clan, was executed by Saddam's regime in 1982. Sajri subsequently fled to Jordan, where he is a successful businessman and cigarette manufacturer. Although opposed to Saddam, Sajri apparently was not involved with the political opposition before the war. Al-Sajri expressed appreciation for U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Khalilzad's activities, observing that he "is working in the right way." Al-Sajri left Amman on December 2 for a week of politicking in Iraq, but expressed willingness to meet again after his return. For political and security reasons he expressed reservations about meeting with USG representatives in Iraq, but promised to revisit this issue "after the election."

¶6. (C) Sajri claims to be personally pro-Western, but according to Emboff Iraqi contact Husam Ghazali (strictly protect), Sajri's brother joined the insurgency and was

killed in 2004. Note: Ghazalee, a long time friend of Sajri, added that Sajri was not close to this brother and considered him a "fool" for joining the insurgency. End Note. Sajri's tribal ties, recent local business activities, and family links to the insurgency have made him well known in the Tikrit and Beiji areas, according to Ghazali.

17. (C) Embassy Baghdad Comment: It is important to note that expats like Sajri have an uncertain political weight in Iraq, and have generally not faired very well in elections. End Embassy Baghdad Comment.

18. (U) This cable was cleared by Embassy Baghdad.  
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